



# NEWS RELEASE

## OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR HOWARD COUNTY

**For Immediate Release:**

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### **Pikesville Man is Convicted/Sentenced on Human Trafficking and Prostitution Charges**

A Pikesville man has been convicted of human trafficking and prostitution arising from a traffic stop in Columbia on March 22. William O. Murray, 29, of the 8000 block of Arrowhead Road, plead guilty in Howard County Circuit court this morning and was sentenced to four years in prison.

Assistant State's Attorney Colleen McGuinn told the court that when police stopped Murray's rental vehicle on Snowden River Parkway they detected a strong owner of burnt marijuana and saw two burnt marijuana blunt tips in the center console. Murray and a woman with him were arrested and taken to central booking for processing but Murray fell ill and was subsequently transported to the hospital having possibly ingested controlled dangerous substances.

The woman was released but told police that she and Murray were staying at the Extended Stay America hotel in Columbia where she worked for Murray as a prostitute and that he controlled her daily activities. She advised that Murray retained her earnings and paid her by giving her heroin. Murray posted ads for the woman's services on [Backpage.com](http://Backpage.com) using one of four cell phones seized from his vehicle.

At the time of his arrest police found over \$700 cash in Murray's pants pocket. A search of his apartment led to the discovery of drug paraphernalia and Visa gift cards that could be used to purchase bitcoins digital currency and to post prostitution advertisements on [Backpage.com](http://Backpage.com). A forensic examination of the cell phones revealed images and text messages consistent with prostitution and sex trafficking.

Murray apologized to the court before Judge Timothy J. McCrone sentenced him to 10 years in prison, suspending all but four years on the human trafficking charge, and five years consecutive but fully suspended on the prostitution charge. Upon release, Murray will be placed on five years of supervised probation.

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